

Council on Postsecondary Education
September 21, 2003

P-16 Council Update

The state P-16 Council is continuing to consider ways to increase the level of preparation of high school and GED graduates for postsecondary education and the skilled workplace. September's meeting focused on the national and state data supporting the role of a rigorous high school curriculum in meeting Kentucky's educational and economic goals, including reducing the achievement gap among various populations.

At its September meeting held at the University of Louisville, the state P-16 Council reviewed policy issues it will address over the coming year. Currently, the P-16 Council also is completing a vision statement, statement of objectives, and set of accountability measures for P-16 work in Kentucky. This year the Council will give priority to implementing the findings of the American Diploma Project (see July 28, 2003, Council on Postsecondary Education agenda book) and creating P-16 solutions to the opportunity gap in Kentucky between poor and minority students and their peers.

The need for good data collection to create policies that promote student learning was a central theme of September's meeting. Kati Haycock, director of The Education Trust, presented national and state data showing how access to a college preparatory curriculum decreases disparities in achievement across all demographic categories. Staff reported the results of Kentucky's recent participation in a data project sponsored by The Education Trust to track the effects of high school curricula on postsecondary remediation and retention rates and the effect of remediation on persistence and graduation rates. A representative from the ACT reviewed Kentucky's 2003 results. The number of students reporting that they had taken the college-preparatory "ACT core" curriculum increased, and Kentucky's ACT overall performance has risen this past year, though it still remains below the national average.

Sheila Byrd, director of The American Diploma Project, presented a near-final version of the benchmarks of college and workplace readiness in mathematics and English language arts. At its March meeting, the P-16 Council endorsed the plan developed by partner agency staffs to implement policy recommendations made by the ADP Policy Panel in December. The Council on Postsecondary Education also endorsed this plan at its July 28, 2003, meeting.

The data presented at the meeting reinforced the P-16 Council's recommendation to create one high school curriculum that prepares all students for college and the workplace. Implementation of the ADP benchmarks will move Kentucky toward that goal.

Since the P-16 Council's June meeting, six more local P-16 councils have received start-up or supplemental funding from the Council: The Partners for School Success P-16 Council covering the Maysville area; the Pennyryle P-16 Council including five counties in Western Kentucky; the Pike County P-16 Council; the Tri-County P-16 Council including Henderson, Union, and Webster Counties; the Whitley County P-16 Council, including Bell and Knox Counties; and the Madisonville Area P-16 Council. The local P-16 council initiative in Kentucky is recognized as one of the most successful in the nation. New proposals are being solicited for 2003-04. The goal is for every county in Kentucky to be a part of the local and state P-16 efforts.

The Council on Postsecondary Education and the Council of Chief Academic Officers, in cooperation with Eastern Kentucky University, will sponsor the third Teacher Quality Summit at Eastern Kentucky University October 9 and 10, 2003. This summit will continue the effort of the previous summits to fully implement the statewide plan for teacher education. In addition, this year's summit will focus on improving coordination between postsecondary programs and the professional development needs of local P-12 districts. The No Child Left Behind Act and the demise of the regional service centers in Kentucky have increased postsecondary education's responsibility to meet P-12 teacher professional development needs. The theme of the summit is "A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom."